

THE
STORY
ON WHICH THE
NEW TRAGEDY,
CALL'D,
The Roman Father,
Is FOUNDED.

With some ACCOUNT of
The AUTHOR,
AND
His WRITINGS.

L O N D O N :

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T H E
S T O R Y
ON WHICH THE
NEW TRAGEDY,
CALL'D,

The Roman Father,
Is F O U N D E D.

IN the eighty-third year of Rome,
when the differences between the
Romans and Sabines grew very
high, Cælius, the Alban general,
was found dead in his tent, but by
what means destroy'd was never known,
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and the command was given to Fuffetius, a man of great humanity, and bore much tenderness for many of the families of Rome, who were nearly related to those of the Alban state.

These two states had look'd upon each other with envious eyes, almost ever since the foundation of Rome; yet the principal families of both parties had, by relation, a natural affection, that the love of glory, nor even the ambitious views of power, could hardly efface.

Fuffetius, soon after he had taken the command, advanc'd towards the enemy, urg'd on by the repeated importunities of the Alban army; for tho' he was accounted good and wise, his courage stood but in low reputation, even in the army he commanded. Tullus Hostilius was not backward to meet him, and every one expected a battle would immediately ensue; but, on the contrary, when all was ready for an engagement, the relenting hearts of
Romans

Romans and Sabines, being all near in blood to each other, rather shed tears than blood at this meeting; and, after a pause of grief, and a struggle with honour, they again (as they had often done before) retir'd to their several camps, without either party giving a reason for declining a battle, or suffering shame for a mutual retreat.

However, the affinity of blood, tho' not confess'd in the field, was discover'd in private by the different senates of Rome and Alba: they each of them found, that when they advanc'd army against army, they brought father against son, and brother against brother.

Fuffetius was the first that consider'd this; and, in consultation with some of the high officers of the Sabines, discover'd his opinion, and how the war might be put an end to, by an honourable accommodation with the Romans. The persons then in council approv'd his design; and accordingly a messenger
was

was dispatch'd to Tullus Hostilius, to desire a truce, and that he would give Fuffetius a conference, in order to put an end to the differences so long subsisting between the two states. Tullus receiv'd this invitation with great transport, and appointed to meet the Sabine general, with the most learn'd and prudent of his commanders, between the two armies.—They accordingly met, and Fuffetius open'd the conference, by setting forth the dangers they expos'd themselves to, by harrassing each other—
 ' The Fidenates and Veientes, said he,
 ' are now united, and only wait for our
 ' engaging, to take the advantage of
 ' the confusion a battle must of course
 ' occasion, to cut off either party from
 ' a retreat, and so to throw off the al-
 ' legiance we have long oblig'd them
 ' to, if not make themselves masters of
 ' Rome and Alba—No, brave Tul-
 ' lus, continu'd he, let not our quar-
 ' rels, which were first bred by the
 ' loss of a few cattle only, give our
 ' perfidious neighbours an opportunity
 ' of aggrandizing themselves, and tri-
 ' umphing

‘umpling over our folly——Let us
 ‘put up with our losses on either side,
 ‘unite in one body, join our armies, and
 ‘with united force fall on the common
 ‘enemy.’

This was receiv’d with general applause from both armies, which was follow’d by a dead silence, expecting Tullus’s reply.

Tullus, in a moving speech, repeated the many mournful incidents the long war had produc’d, how many noble families the sword had lent tears to, and how many more must partake of the misery, if the war should continue: adding, his opinion was the same with Fufetius, that the neighbouring states would one day take advantage of their disputes, and that no way could be so effectual to disappoint their impious schemes, as to compose their differences, and unite the Romans and Sabines in one interest——‘Let our government, said he, ‘our policy, our laws be the same, and every Roman citizen be
 ‘look’d

'look'd upon in Alba as a free mem-
'ber of the state, and every Sabine
'have the same privileges in Rome as
'in Alba.'

This started an objection among
some of the principal men in each
state; for it was then ask'd, that tho'
they were willing to be so united,
which nation should give laws to the
other; should Rome to Alba, or Alba
to Rome, or should they meet as one
senate?

This point produc'd many argu-
ments on both sides, but neither had
force enough to bring the other over
to their opinion; which occasion'd
much murmuring, and the treaty had
like to have been dissolv'd before com-
pleted.

At length Tullus advanc'd towards
Puffetius, and offer'd to engage with
him in single combat; proposing, that
who ever conquer'd, the state who
own'd

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own'd the victor, should give laws to the other: adding, he would not wish to hazard life in a nobler cause, than his country's glory; or lose it with more honour, than to procure her happiness.

As it has been before observ'd, the army had no high opinion of Fuffetius's courage; and he now prov'd, they were not wrong in their judgment; for he declin'd the combat, and propos'd that three champions should be chose from either state, to end this difference: adding, that a nation's freedom, was too great a stake to be left to one single hand to dispute.

Tullus accepted this proposal; and both armies immediately retir'd to consult their different senates, and fix upon the heroes that should fight this glorious battle.

Ambition, and the love of fame, were now so prevalent in Rome, that the senate was immediately throng'd with

with youths, all offering their service in their country's cause — The senate, after long debates, fixt on the family of the Horatii to vindicate their rights.

The Horatii was a noble family in Rome, whose ancestors came thither with the founder; and at this time, consisted of an aged father, three sons (who had often prov'd their prowess in the field) and a daughter, no less famous for her beauty, than the sons were for their valour. — These three youths being fixt on for this important action, the old man, in rapture, cry'd out — ‘ I am a happy father’ —

The people, being acquainted with the elected youths, approv'd the choice with vehement acclamations; and, waited with impatience, to know whom the Alban state had chose for their competitors in glory.

However,

However, they were not long before the news came from the Alban state, who were the chosen champions. In short, they fixt upon the Curiatii, a family both by birth and marriage nearly related to the Horatii of Rome. This choice did not at all please the Romans; for they not only thought it cruel that brothers should enter the lists against brothers, but they fear'd that pity and natural affection might damp their heroes courage, and the Roman cause suffer from their tenderness; for these two families were not only ally'd, but had, spite of the great disputes between the two nations, still preserv'd a perfect harmony and friendship together; nay, their intimacy was so great, that old Horatius had contracted his daughter to the eldest son of the Curiatii; who had long since been join'd by the priests, had not the commotions of the jarring states prevented it.

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The Sabines too were not without the same apprehensions, from the affinity of blood in these champions, and were for a new election, nor were the Romans quite averse to such an alteration; but the young heroes, emulous of glory, refus'd to give up the honour their country had so lately bestow'd upon them. The fathers too, so far from fearing the loss of their sons, insisted on the first choice; and, in spite of all persuasions, would not consent to any change. The old Horatius was particularly strenuous for his sons engaging with their brothers, the Sabines; saying, he desir'd to have no farther pleasure in this world, than to see his sons fall with honour, or live with glory.

Not to tire my readers with a long account of the particular ceremonies upon this occasion, I shall only inform them, that, after objections rais'd and answer'd, it was determin'd, both by the Romans and Sabines, to
stick

stick to their first choice, and freely submit to the conditions on which they were to engage.

Each state took oaths, and confirm'd them by sacrifices, to let all differences end, according to the articles before stipulated, and stand to the fortune of their several champions.

The army was drawn round a large plain, containing four or five Stadia, between the camps of the Romans and Sabines——Tullus led out the Horatii, and Fuffetius the Curiatii, while every eye was fixt to see this terrible encounter. They were all fix arm'd, like men that privately determin'd to kill, or not survive the conflict.

While all Rome was employ'd in gazing at her heroes, and matrons and virgins strewing their way with flowers, the pious daughter of Horatius retir'd to her chamber, and spent the dreadful interim of time with confus'd

fus'd prayers for her country's liberty,
and for her lover's life, one opposite to
the other.

At length the combatants engag'd—
Every eye could see the glittering of
their swords, and hear the clashing of
their arms, but were plac'd at too
great a distance to distinguish on which
side Fortune seem'd to incline—
Shouts were heard on every side; tho'
none who lent his voice, could say to
which side he gave it.— At length
it plainly was perceiv'd, that the eldest
of the Alban brothers, threw the
eldest of the Horatian brothers to the
ground, but not without some marks
of the deceas'd's bravery.— While
the Sabines were applauding this ac-
tion, they had the pleasure to see the
next of the Horatii fall beneath the
superior prowess of his antagonist.

The acclamations of the Sabines did
not a little terrify the Romans, who
plainly perceiv'd two of their comba-
tants kill'd.

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The three Alban brothers, tho' greatly wounded, still kept the field, and no enemy to oppose them but the youngest brother of the Horatii——whom they look'd upon as an easy conquest: but he, by a stratagem, soon turn'd the battle in favour of the Romans.

When he saw his brothers prostrate on the ground, and the exulting Albans traversing the field, he pretended to fly from the unequal combat, amidst the hoots and curses of the Roman citizens and soldiers. The three Curiatii follow'd him with all the speed their wounds, receiv'd from the slaughter'd Horatii, would permit them——The flying Publius (for so was he nam'd) when he saw one out of the reach of the other two assistants, turn'd short, and bravely laid him on a level with his brothers; and, while flush'd with this success, another came (but too late) to take his brother's part, met the same fate from the enrag'd hand of Publius. Scarce had he ended this second brother, but the third, panting

ing for breath, and fainting with many wounds, came up; to whom Publius cry'd out, ' Thus, to the glory of my country, I sacrifice the best and noblest friend that ever Alba had from Rome;' and, with these words, struck his dagger in his throat. He dy'd, and Publius stripp'd him of all the shining ornaments of war he wore; among which was a robe wrought by the fair hands of Horatius's daughter, and presented to him on the day they were, by mutual love, contracted to each other. As this was the most remarkable distinction he had on, Publius, with unthinking triumph, threw it over his shoulders, and presented himself to the populace.

Applause, restrain'd by horror, for awhile was silent; but, when the thoughts of public good had got the better of natural pity, the acclamations were incredible; the exulting Romans took the field, while the disappointed Albans sunk by slow degrees to condole with their distress'd families.

Fuffetius,

Fuffetius, notwithstanding, undaunted stood the loss of liberty; and, advancing to the midst of the field, bestow'd great praise upon the valiant Publius; and, at the same time, acknowledg'd the supremacy they had won, by asking Tullus, if he had any commands for him or his army——To which Tullus reply'd, 'None; but to remember we are friends.'——Thus the armies parted.

The Sabines return'd, reviling Fuffetius for not accepting the first challenge; saying, had he met Tullus, as was first propos'd, Rome had been subject to the Alban state. Others accus'd him of fear; and, in gross language, said, the loss of liberty, was owing to their general's cowardice.

Publius, in the mean time, was conducted into Rome, amidst the acclamations of the whole Roman people; while the smiles of liberty were seen in every face, every one press'd to behold him, and look'd upon him as the guardian god of their country.

But

But this universal joy was soon o'er-cast by an accident, that put all Rome in tears, — Horatius's daughter, having heard of the death of her brothers, and her lover, in agonies of grief flew from her father's house; and, when the people thought her violence was occasion'd by her love to Rome, and eagerness to meet her victorious brother, and give him welcome as a conqueror and preserver of their liberties, she met him with all the rage of an encens'd enemy; accus'd him as a murderer and stranger to humanity, and call'd down vengeance from the gods on him, Rome, and all that had consented to the action.

The inflam'd youth, in the midst of triumph, meeting so unexpected a welcome from his own sister, and one whom he dearly lov'd, without any hesitation, plung'd his sword into her bosom, and then proceeded to his father's house.

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The people of Rome were divided upon this action: some call'd it glorious, others cruel; and, the last party so prevail'd, that Publius was brought to tryal before the people for it, and was acquitted with honour.

As the expectation of the town is much rais'd by the new tragedy of *The ROMAN FATHER*, which is to be acted this night at the theatre royal in Drury-Lane, 'twas judg'd the foregoing historical facts, from whence it is taken, with an account of the reputed author of the play, and other performances he has before entertain'd the town with, would not be disagreeable to the gentlemen and ladies who are to be spectators of the play.

Mr. W.—D is well known to the poetical world, by his *essay on ridicule*; his *letter from Anna Bullen to Henry the eighth* (after the manner of Ovid) and by many other lesser pieces,

D

printed

printed in a late collection of poems by
Mr. Doddsley.

He was a fellow of St. John's-Col-
lege, in Cambridge, and much esteem'd
in that university; and is now very de-
servedly belov'd, by all who know him,
for his abilities, genius and modesty.

Corneille, the Shakespear of the
French, has written a tragedy upon the
same story, which met with most ex-
traordinary success; and, if what be said
about Mr. W——D's play be true,
viz. that there is much more of the
pathetic introduc'd in it, than in the
French tragedy, we may reasonably ex-
pect The ROMAN FATHER
will prove a very formidable rival to
the HORACE of Corneille.

FINIS.